Being the History of Three Months in the Life of an English Gentleman.

BY ANTHONY HOPE.

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XVII.—Continued.

It fell, as I judged from the sound and the circles on the water, within a yard of the pipe. And Rupert, taking out his revolver, began to shoot at it. The first two shots missed the bottle, but hit the pipe. The third shattered the bottle. I hoped that the young ruffian would be content; but he emptied the other barrels at the pipe, and one, skimming over the pipe, whistled through my hair as I crouched on the 'Ware bridge!" a voice cried, to my

Rupert and De Gautet cried, "A mo-

and ran across. The bridge was drawn back, and all became still. The drawn back, and all became still. The clock struck a quarter past 1. I rose and stretched myself and yawned.

I think some 10 minutes had passed when I heard a slight noise to my right. I peered over the pipe, and saw a dark

I what s the matter; cried a voice—the done his butcher's work, for he was answered by the very words the most skillful swordsman I have ever met; but even as he pressed me hard the half-mad, wasted, wan creature in the corner leaped high in luna-

when I heard a slight noise to my right.

I peered over the pipe, and saw a dark figure standing in the gateway that led to the bridge. It was a man. By the careless, graceful poise I guessed it to be Rupert again. He held a sword in his hand, and he stood motionless for a minute or two. Wild thoughts ran through me. On what mischief was the young fiend bent now? Then he laugh-



WE WERE SWORD TO SWORD.

ed low to himself, then he turned his face to the wall, took a step in my direction, and to my surprise began to climb down the wall. In an instant I saw that there must be steps in the wall; it was plain. They were cut into or affixed to the wall at intervals of about 18 inches. Rupert set his foot on the lower one. Then he placed his body go forward to the lower one. Then he placed his body go forward to the lunge, and noiselessly let himself down into the water. Had it been a marter of my life only I would have swam to meet the water. Had it been a marter of my life only I would have swam to meet him. Dearly would I have loved to fight it out with him then and there-with steel, on a fine night and none to come between us. But there was the King! I restrained myself, but I could not bridle my swift breathing, and I watched him with the intensest eager-

He swam leisurely and quietly across There were more footsteps up on the other side, and he climbed them. When he set fact in the gateway standing on the drawn-back bridge, he felt in his pocket and took something out. I heard him unlock the door. I could hear no noise of its closing behind him. He vanished from my sight.

Abandoning my ladder—I saw I did not need it now—I swam to the side of the bridge, and climbed halfway up the steps. There I hung, with my sword in my hand, listening eagerly. The Duke's room was shuttered and dark. There room was shuttered and dark. There was a light in the window on the opposite side of the bridge. Not a sound broke the silence, till half-past 1 chimed from the great clock in the tower of the chateau.

There were other plots than mine afoot in the castle that night.

The Foreing of the Trap.

The position wherein I stood does not appear very favorable to thought; yet for the next moment or two I thought profoundly. I had, I told myself, scored one point. Be Rupert Hentzau's errand what it might, and the willainy he was engaged on what it would, I had scored one point. He was on the other side of the moat from the King, and it would be by no fault of mine if ever he set foot on the same side again. I had three left to deal with; two on guard and De Gautet in his bed. Ah, if I had the keys! I stood and listened.

Ind them I—God lorgive me:—I believe I struck a dead man's face.

At last I had them. There were but there. Seizing the largest, I felt the lock of the door that led to the cell. I fitted in the key. It was right! The lock turned. I drew the door close bridge against them, and daring them bridge against them, and daring them to come on; or, rather, bidding them and Black Michael to him; and they, having no firearms, cowered before the desperate man and dared not attack him. They whispered to one another; and in the backnost rank I saw my with; two on guard and De Gautet in his bed. Ah, if I had the keys! I stood and listened.

"What in the devil can it be?" I hand. Rupert Hentzau was trousers and shirt; the white linen was stained with blood; but his easy, buoy-ant pose told me that he was himself either not touched at all or merely scratched. There he stood, holding the bridge against them, and daring them to come on; or, rather, bidding them and locked it as noiselessly as I could, putting the key in my pock-the.

I found myself at the top of a flight of steep stone stairs. An oil lamp burned dimly in the bracket. I took it down and held it in my hand, and I stood and listened.

"What in the dead man's face.

At last I had them. There were but the cell. I felt the lock untered to come on; or, rather, bidding them and locked it as noiselessly as I could, putting the key in my pock-the.

I found myself at the top of a flight of steep stone stairs. An oil lamp burned dimly in the bracket. I to would have risked everything and attacked Detchard and Bersonin before their friends could join them. But I was powerless. I must wait till the coming of my friends enticed some one to cross the bridge—some one with the large and the way and I was the same of the stairs.

I strained to hear the approximation of the stairs.

And another answered:

"Shall we kill me?"

I strained to hear the approximation of the stairs.

All was still on the other side. The Duke's room remained inscrutable be- we strike too soon."

knees beside him, and leaned my ear down to hear if he breathed. But before I could, there was a loud rattle from the outside. I knew the sound: the drawbridge was being pushed out. A moment later it rang home against the wall on my side of the moat. I should be caught in a trap, and the king with me, if he yet lived. He must take his charge to live or to die. take his chance, to live or to die. I took my sword, and passed into the room. Who were pushing the ridge out-my men? If so, all My eye fell on the revolvers, and I seized one, and paused to listen in the doorway of the outer room. To listen, say I? Yes, and to get my breath; and I tore my shirt and twisted a strip of it round my bleeding arm. and stood listening again. I have given the world to hear Sapt's voice. For I was faint, spent, and weary. And that wildcat, Rupert Hent-cau, was yet at large in the castle, Yet, because I could better defend the nar-row door at the top of the stairs than the wider entrance to the room, I dragged myself up the steps, and stood

'Come and share the fun!"

curse he fell across the body of his

Was the King dead? It was my

ehind it, listening.

What was the sound? Again strange one for the place and the time Come on, Michael!"

Johann was there, then—come to the rescue of the Duke! How would he open the door for me? For I feared that Rupert had slain him.

"Help!" cried the Duke's voice, faint and husky.

I heard a stir on the stairs above me; and I heard a stir down to my

I heard a stir on the stairs above me; and I heard a stir down to my right, in the direction of the King's cell. But before anything happened on my side of the moat I saw five or six men round young Rupert in the embrasure of Madame's window. Three or four times he lunged with incompanies of the stairs above "Well, the bridge is there! Come over it! And in God's name, let's see Black Michael! Keep back, you curs? Michael, come and fight for her!"

If it were a three-cornered fight I might yet bear my part. I turned the key in the door and looked out.

embrasure of Madame's window. Three or four times he lunged with incomparable dash and dexterity. For an instant they fell back, leaving a ring round him. He leaped on the parapet of the window, laughing as he leaped, and waving his sword in his hand. He was drunk with blood, and he laughed again wildly as he flung himself headlong into the moat.

What became of him then? I did not see, for as he leaped De Gautet's lean face looked out through the door by me, and without a second's hesitation I struck at him with all the strength God had given me, and he fell dead in the doorway without a word or a groan. I dropped on my knees by him. Where were the keys? I found myself muttering: "The keys, man, the keys!" as though he had been yet alive and could listen; and when I could not find them I—God forgive me!—I better three. Selzing the largest, I felt the

By marvelous chance I was master. The cravens would oppose me no more their friends could follow the faced me at the bottom of the stairs.

And another answered:

"Shall we kill him?"

I strained to hear the answer, and the faced me at the bottom of the stairs.

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I strained to hear the answer, and thim to his account with his sins on his head. He did not so much as know that I was there. I did nothing—why, that I was there. I did nothing—why, I had killed to hear the faced me at the bottom of the stairs.

"Shall we kill him?"

I strained to hear the answer, and the did not so much as know that I was there. I did nothing—why, I had killed to hear the answer, and the did not so much as know that I was there. I did nothing—why, I had killed to hear the answer, and the did not so much as know that I was there. I did nothing—why, I had killed the faced me at the bottom of the stairs.

The cravens would opposite the next stairs.

I had but to raise my revolver, and I sent him to his account with his sins on his head. He did not so much as know that I was there. I did nothing—why, I had killed the faced me at the bottom of the stairs.

I had but to raise my revolver, and I sent him to his account with his sins on his head. He did not so much as know that I was there. I did nothing—why, I had killed the faced me at the bottom of the fa "Wait a bit. There'll be trouble if one man stealthily that night, and an

Duke's room remained inscrutable behind its shutters. The light burned steadily in Mme. de Mauban's window. Then I heard the faintest, faintest sound; it came from behind the door which led to the drawbridge on the other side of the moat. It but just reached my ear, yet I could not be mistaken as to what it was, It was made by a key being turned yery carefully.

other by luck rather than skill-per

followed by a shrick of utter terror.

I was tingling in every nerve.

King, and perhaps me also, had it not by what now hannered before their

We were sword to sword. By blessed With a wonderful effort she calmed It was 3 o'clock now, and day was chance neither he nor Bersonin had herself till she grood still and rigid. dawning. I was on a long, straight been wearing their revolvers. I found Then, very slowly and deliberately, she grass avenue, and 100 yards ahead ran

Detchard replied with a savage thrust. He all but had me. there to be none—but there was my rope, which would still be hanging where I had left it. He would come to where it was before I could. Perhaps he would find it; and if he drew it up after him he would get a good start of time. I put forth all my remaining strength and pressed on. At last I began to gain on him; for he, occupied with his search, unconsciously slackened his pace.

Ah, he had found it! A low shout of triumph came from him. He lid hold of it, and began to hand hiraselt up. I was near enough to hear him mutter: "How the devil comes this mutter: "No? Faith, I was between two hanging in multer saws at the rope, and he, less; remove all symptoms of the college of the college of the castle?"

"Thanks to the most gallant gentleman that lives," said he softly, "the King is alive!"

"Thanks to the most gallant gentleman that lives," said he softly, "the King is alive!"

The little farm-girl stood by us, weeping for fright and wide-eyed won-der; for she had seen me at Zenda; and was not I, pallid, dripping, foul and when I heard that the King?

"You fool!" said Rupert pleasantly.
"You fool!" said Rupert pleasantly "Come on! Come, on man!" I cried. "Come and share the fun!"

And the King laughed gleefully, and came on, pushing his chair before him."

With an oath Detchard skipped back, and before I knew what he was doing had turned his sword against the King. He made one fierce cut at the King, and the King, with a piteous cry, dropped where he stood. The stout ruffian turned to face me again. But this own hand had prepared his destruction; for in turning he trod in the pool of blood that flowed from the dead physician. He slipped; he fell.

a spot that he could climb. I knew there to be none—but there was my rope, which would still be hanging "Uk said I. "Wha where I had left it. He would come to where it was before I could. Perhaps he would find it; and if he drew it up after him he would get a good start of me. I put forth all my remaining its strength and pressed on. At last I began to gain on him; for he, occubied with his search, unconsciously slackened his pace.

"You "And "He is lives."

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Ah, he had found it' A low shout "I specific perhaps he would still be hanging "I ki said I."

"And "Yes." dead physician. He slipped; he fell. Like a dart I was upon him. I caught him by the throat, and before he could

recover himself I drove my blade up. mutter: "How the devil comes this fires!" here?" I was at the rope, and he, hanging in midair, saw me; but I could fight like a man."

was the king dead; it was my first thought. I rushed to where he lay. Aye, it seemed as if he were dead, for he had a great gash across the forehead, and he lay still in a huddled mass on the floor. I dropped on my knees beside him, and leaned my ear

and a loud shout reached us from the moat.

Rupert smiled again and waved his on a horse. He was riding hard, and he carried a revolver in his hand. It order.

Behind us, and, looking round, I saw Just at the turn of the avenue a man hand to me.

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been for one devoted man who gave his life for the King. For when I forced the door the sight I saw was this: The King stood in the corner of the room; broken by his sickness, he could do nothing; his fettered hands moved uselessly up and down, and he was laughing horribly in half-mad delirium. Detchard and the doctor were together in the middle of the room; and the doctor had flung him forced had a woman staggered on to the disappeared from above me.

It is hould like a turn with you, but it's a little too hot!" said he, and he disappeared from above me.

In an instant, without thinking of danger, I laid my hand to the rope. I was pristed the game was up. He ch

were together in the middle of the room; and the doctor had flung himself on the murderer, pinning his hands to his sides for an instant. Then Detchard wrenched himself free from the feeble grip, and as I entered drove his sword through the hapless man.

Then he turned on me, crying:

"At last!"

We were sword to sword. By blessed.

The him and struck the woodwork over my him after him, calling to him to stand. He would not. Unwounded and viscous, he gained on me at every step; but, forgetting everything in the world extend that the woodwork over my him and struck the woodwork over my him after him, calling to him to stand. He would not. Unwounded and viscous, he gained on me at every step; but, forgetting everything in the world extend the woodwork over my him and struck the

we were sword to sword. By blossed between the symmetry of the symmetry. It was a symmetry of the symmetry. Then, the symmetry is swyty and deliberately, e.g. the symmetry is symmetry and deliberately, e.g. the symmetry and patient them afterward, ready loaded, on the began to raise her arm again, taking them the symmetry of the sym jumped on the horse, sitting sideways like a woman; and then he waited for

"Stop, Rupert, stop!"
I saw him look over his shoulder, but he swam en. hie was under the bank now, searching, as I guessed, for a spot that he could climb. I knew up his hand, saying:

"Get off your horse," I cried, "and

hanging in midair, saw me; but I could not reach him.

"Hullo! who's here?" he cried in distributed to move the for the King—I dare say I was bale around the mough to lend color to the thought, but an instant later he cried:

"Why, it's the play-actor! How came you here, man?"

And so saying he gained the bank.

I laid hold of the rope, but I paused. He stood on the bank, sword in hand, and he could cut may head open or spit me through the heart as I came up.

The fight like a man."

"Before a lady!" said he, pointing to the warming the warming the warming the warming to the warming the me through the heart as I came up.

I let go the repe.
"Never mind," said I; "but as I'm here I think I'l stay."
He smiled down on me.
"These women are the deuce—" he and then and there, I doubt not, one, and then and there is the forceness of my attack: otherwise I think he must have killed me. I sank on my knee, panting, expecting him to ride at me. And so he would have done, and then and there, I doubt not, one, the content of the conten began, when suddenly the great bell or both of us would have died; but at of the castle began to ring furiously, the moment there came a shout from

"Au revoir, Rudoif Rassendyll!"
Then, with his cheek streaming blood, but his lips laughing and his blood, but his lips laughing and his body swaying with ease and grace, he bowed to me, and he bowed to the farm girl, who had drawn near in trembling fascination; and he waved his hand to Fritz, who was just within range and let fly a shot at him. The ball came nigh doing its work, for it struck the sword he had and and he struck the sword he held, and he dropped the sword with an oath, wring-ing his fingers, and clapped his heels

rah!" again. But I could not. And being very tired, and new very cold, I huddled myself close up to Fritz, to get the warmth of him, and shut my eyes

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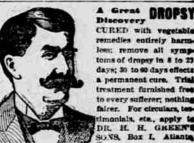
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## He took his handkerchief and wiped my lips, and bent and kissed me on the forehead. "Thanks to the most callent could



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No doubt they had a light, but they should not use it. It was come to the withdrawn.

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No doubt they should not use it. It was come to the should indicate with a V which premium for no mental records on the left to leave to his family and a convenient reference for leave to his family and a convenient reference for leave to his family and he laughed here.

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